

R. A. P. P. O. R. T.

*Reports and Projects/Presentations on Research Topics
w Evidence from Research Informs Decisions about Public Health Programs*

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EDITORS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth and the City of Hamilton are amalgamating their administrative structures. This amalgamation has resulted in opportunities for cost savings and a restructuring of the organization.

One significant change is the integration of Social Services and Public Health under the leadership of General Manager, **Michael Schuster**. The new organizational design takes into consideration the legal requirement for the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) to report directly to the Board of Health Regional Council on public health and program direction on public health programs.

Dr Elizabeth Richardson, MOH will have full administrative and functional responsibility for the communicable diseases group and functional management responsibility for all remaining public health programs and services. The associate MOH will have responsibility for the environmental health programs and the dental programs. Other relationships and responsibilities will be determined after the currently vacant position is filled.

The Directors appointments for this Social and Public Health Services Division are:

Housing and Shelter	Mark Mescarenhas
Macassa Lodge	Bob Malloy
Wentworth Lodge	Judy Evans
Employment and Income Support	Alfred Spencer
Community Support and Research	Jane Underwood
Parent and Child Services	Jane Soldera
Youth and Mental Health	Vicki Woodcox
Healthy Lifestyles and Disease Prevention	Helen Hale Tomaszik
Financial and Administration	Dan McInnis

Councilor **Marvin Caplan** has been appointed to the Mandatory Programs Working Group, a sub-committee of the AMO Liaison Committee which has been established to address issues arising from the implementation of the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, December 1997 and to advise the Ministry of Health/Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO): Public Health Committee. The membership includes the Chief Medical Officer of Health/Director Public Health Branch, who is the chair, representatives from AMO Association of Local Public Health Agencies and Ontario Public Health Association.

The Group will identify implementation issues, including cost, develop options to address these issues and provide advice to guide ongoing refinement of the Guidelines

- **Jane Underwood** has been appointed as the RNAO representative to the Compliance Assessment Steering Committee which is an advisory committee to the Ministry of Health, Public Health Branch. The Steering Committee will participate in the development and finalization of a system of assessments of compliance with the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines.
- School of Social Work associate professor Jim Rice has been awarded a Queen's University Non Profit Sector Research Initiative of \$17,000. Rice and two colleagues, Don Jaffray, executive director, Social Planning and Research Council, and **Debbie Sheehan**, program manager, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Social and Public Health Services Division will conduct a study that measures the capacity of the volunteer/non profit sectors to meet the needs of families at risk.
- Funding from the Canadian Health Research Foundation will assist professors Susan Watt, School of Social Work, and **Wendy Sword**, School of Nursing, in surveying the use of health and social services by new mothers in Ontario. Watt and Sword are co-principal investigators of the study being conducted jointly by McMaster University System-Linked Unit on Health and Social Service Utilization, the Regional Social and Public Health Services, PHRED Program and St. Joseph's Health Care System Research Network.

IN THE NEWS

Highlights from the Progress of Canada's Children, 1998

Canadian children and youth are safer and better educated but losing out on economic security, family life and in the labour force. The report noted the following factors as contributors to child and youth well-being: family life; economic security; physical safety; community resources; civic vitality; health; social engagement; learning; labour force; and policy initiatives for children and youth. Emerging trends show that child and youth poverty rates are rising with higher poverty rates among the aboriginal and immigrant youth population. Community resources are decreasing causing a 100% increase in food bank use since 1989. One third of kids in separated families lack financial support from their non-custodial parent. Labour force participation shows a decline in youth summer employment rates.

Although the majority of children and teens are in good physical condition, teen smoking rates have risen significantly; rates of teen pregnancy are increasing; a significant minority of teens report depression; and poor kids face serious environmental hazards to their health.

On a positive note the report stated that there is an increase in the number of "child-friendly" municipal initiatives; criminal charges against youth is declining; there is a high rate of youth literacy; and the rate of injury-related deaths of children and youth is falling.

To measure poverty, the report uses a common measure called low-income cutoffs or LICOs. Using this measure of poverty, it means 20 per cent of children or 24,000 children under 18 years of age in Hamilton-Wentworth live in poverty. Hamilton has a lower poverty level than Toronto, but it's higher than both St. Catharines and Niagara. Toronto has 37.3 per cent of children under 12 who are poor which makes it the highest in Canada.

The Hamilton Spectator
December 8, 1998

Note : The report, published by the Canadian Council on Social Development is available in the Hamilton-Wentworth Social and Public Health Services Library.

MEET THE PEOPLE

Mary Ann O'Brien

Coordinator PHRED Effective Public Health Practice Project and Assistant Clinical Professor, School of Rehabilitation Science McMaster University

1. Describe your responsibilities and role in Social and Public Health Services.

The PHRED Effective Professional Practice Project is funded by the Public Health Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health. The goal of the project is to produce 15 summary statements based upon systematic reviews of interventions pertaining to the Mandatory Programs and Service Guidelines. The six PHREDs throughout the province are involved in the review process. Representatives from most public health units across Ontario are involved in the project as peer reviewers. Currently, nine new reviews, four updates of reviews and two reviews of reviews are underway. My role is to co-ordinate the day-to-day management of the project and to ensure that the reviews are based upon sound methods. I especially enjoy consulting with reviewers to discuss methodological issues related to the review question.

2. What were your accomplishments and activities before joining our Division?

I have been interested in ways of connecting research findings and practice for a long time. I am trained as a physiotherapist and am familiar with the challenges that a busy practitioner faces in tracking down relevant research literature in order to assist clients to make treatment decisions. As part of my graduate studies, I became interested in systematic reviews of research evidence as a means of helping practitioners keep up to date. I have participated in eight systematic reviews mainly assessing the effectiveness of continuing education interventions. Prior to joining the Public Health Department, I was a research fellow in the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

FOCUS I

Building Healthy Communities: Public Health Nursing in Downtown Hamilton

Jill Detlor
Anne Ehrlich
Lorraine Grypstra
Kathryn King
Lydia Kuratnik
Penny Nelligan

Barbara Overby
Ruth Schofield
Claudia Steffler
Sharon Thorne
LeeAnne Wiebe

Many community residents, health service providers, organizations, and politicians are committed to building healthy communities. Community health, for health professionals, combines knowledge of determinants of health with the skills of working with communities for the outcome of improved health status. One approach to facilitating the process of building healthy communities is empowerment. Empowerment cannot be given or taught, but it is achieved when opportunities for the community to act on its own are created (Corcega, 1992). The focus of building healthy communities using an empowerment model is to promote healthy living.

A community is defined by the people who form it. Therefore, establishing dialogue with the community is essential to establish working relationships with its residents. Over time, working together to assess community assets and needs and to develop appropriate responses to identified issues generates a foundation for sustainable community development.

In December 1996, a visioning workshop was co-ordinated by the Hamilton-Wentworth Department of Public Health Services for agencies who provide service in four downtown neighbourhoods--Beasley, Corktown, Lansdale, and Stinson. As a result, a commitment was made to the broader First Place Primary Health Care Initiative which included an assessment of the neighbourhood's assets in the form of Neighbourhood Profiles.

These profiles were created through meetings with community members, walkabouts, interviews with partners, collecting community stories, participating in community events, co-ordinating community workshops, analysing census data, and organizing the information in a community assessment framework.

On June 1997, the First Place Advisory Group consisting of community residents and service providers, was formed to provide a forum for identifying assets and issues from the four neighbourhoods. This coalition has evolved into a supportive network which attends to neighbourhood concerns through their defined purpose: "To share information to promote the product of health and well-being, acknowledging that information is a product in itself." The group has since renamed itself PHACT (Public Health and Community Together). Several joint initiatives addressing neighbourhood issues have been conducted by PHACT including inviting Michael Fenn, the CEO of the Region, to talk about the impact of Downloading on Downtown Hamilton, writing letters to protest bank closures in the neighbourhoods, and co-ordinating a "Discovering Community Assets" workshop for people who live and work in Downtown Hamilton.

Through the activities undertaken to develop Neighbourhood Profiles and facilitate the formation of PHACT, the Public Health Nurses working in downtown Hamilton have become part of building healthy communities. Public Health Nursing practice shifted from individual-centred practice to a population health promotion approach. As a result of the shift to community-centred work, Public Health Nurses have helped to strengthen the neighbourhoods in order to support the individuals within the neighbourhoods.

There are challenges and successes inherent in truly community-centred work. The challenges include building trust, developing and maintaining relationships, struggling with a joint ownership model, and working in a changing environment. The successes are supporting frequent activities with community members to develop dialogue and relationships, learning together, being internally and externally accountable for our work, developing mutual respect, and working on products together. Some examples of joint work include the Neighbourhood Profiles, PHACT, BAN₄K (Beasley Area Nutrition for Kids, Breakfast Program), and advocating to keep the Bread Store open. Although initial developmental work is intense and requires a lot of time and energy, the blossoming of sustainable and community driven initiatives is evidence of progress toward the overriding goal--a healthy community for all.

References:

Corcega, T.F., Participatory Research: Getting the community involved in health development. *International Nursing Review*. 1992;39(6):185-8

New Choices Innovative Program

Denise Ross

New Choices is a collaborative, centralized approach to provide assistance and support to pregnant substance-using women/teens and their children at one site.

History:

In 1992, the Pregnancy, Alcohol and Drugs (PAD) Network began to recognize that substance-using women/teens often were not being identified in prenatal settings. When they did seek help for their addiction issues, they often were not being asked whether they were pregnant. As a result, women/teens would rarely get needed help early in their pregnancy. Crisis issues related to their own health and the health and well-being of their children would have to be dealt with at the time of delivery. Maternity social workers were seeing a growing number of women who had used alcohol or drugs prenatally but had not received prenatal care, and more babies who very clearly had been exposed to alcohol or drugs in utero.

The PAD Network with the help of a public health nurse initiated a project to assess the needs and the direct services available for this group. The project clearly identified the multiple needs of these clients. Gaps in service delivery and obvious barriers to accessing service (e.g. lack of transportation, child care, and information, fear of losing children, stigma, full range of issues, multiple locations/intake systems.) were few of the barriers for these women.

With the help of the Social Planning and Research Council, several key agencies began to meet in May of 1997 to plan a one-stop service to meet the needs of the women and their children. With a grant from the Hamilton Community Foundation, and in-kind donations of staff and resources from partner agencies, the program opened to clients on April 14, 1998.

The New Choices Program

The program operates full day Tuesday and Friday. The only criteria for the program are: first, the women/teen must be pregnant or have a child under the age of 6 and secondly, the woman/teen must be willing to work on both parenting and her substance use.

The program schedule includes addiction groups, parenting groups, women's groups, mother and child program, and a child program. Individual help for clients is available in defining the needs and goals both in parenting and in substance use, as well as other problems or concerns they may have (e.g. health card, housing, budgeting, relationships, isolation, etc).

Addiction assessments, child development assessments, prenatal and postnatal counselling, and linking families with a primary care physician are all integral parts of the program.

The program has been able to build on the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children initiative. Through a partnership with Grace Haven where New Choices is located, a family home visitor expands the services to in-home support as well. The public health nurse attached to New Choices assesses, refers, and co-ordinates services with the family.

There are supports available on site to accommodate the multiple needs of the women. These include bus tickets, food vouchers, exchange of maternity and children's clothing and baby equipment, as well as emergency food from The Salvation Army food bank.

With the support and collaboration of eight partner agencies and a number of "linked" agencies, New Choices has been able to provide services for both women and children and to develop trust of those families. After nine months, the program has been involved with 57 women (17 pregnant) and 97 children (17 under 12 months). Despite minimal marketing, the program has received referrals from a wide variety of referral sources, has reached the client group it was planned for and is well received by the clients.

For more information, please contact:

Denise Ross, P.H.N.

Tel: (905) 546-3549

New Choices: (905) 522-5556

Tues – Fri

Or

Ruth Schofield, Program Manager

Tel: (905) 546-3633

RESEARCH AROUND AND ABOUT

External

ITitle: Hamilton Community Action on Air Quality
Investigators: Elliott, S.
Co-investigators: Cole, D., Krueger, P., Pengally, D., Voorberg, N.
.....Amount: \$35,000
.....Source: Hamilton Community Foundation
.....Term: April 1998 – March 2000

IITitle: Neighbourhood Planning Information Initiative
Investigators: Regional Social and Public Services Division (Underwood, J., Chambers, L., Ehrlich, A., Feightner, K., Kowalski, W.) Regional Community Services Division: Planning and Development Dept, City of Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council, District Health Council, School of Nursing, Dept of Family Medicine, and Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis at Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Community Care Access Centre, Hamilton Community Foundation
.....Source: In-kind contributions from all partnering agencies, \$800.00 from Hamilton Community Foundation
.....Term: September 1998 – ongoing

Internal

ITitle: North Hamilton Survey Project Stage II
Investigators: Elliott, S.
Co-investigators: Cole, D., Krueger, P., Voorberg, N.
.....Amount: \$25,000
.....Source: PHRED Program
.....Term: Spring 1998 – 1999

IITitle: Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project Hamilton Wentworth Analysis
Investigators: Schuster, M., Woodcox, V., Pearce, B., Wong, K., Feightner, K., Kowalski, W., Bian, C., Monaco, A.
.....Source: Regional Social and Public Services Division: Regional Community Services Division
.....Term: December 1998-Summer 1999

PRESENTATIONS

April

Potter, B., Sheeshka, J., Valaitis, R., The Friendly Restaurant. Promoting a Breastfeeding Friendly Culture April 29, 1998, Winona, Ontario

Ciliska, D., Hayward, S., Dobbins, M., Underwood, J., Brunton, G., Transferring Public Health Nursing Research to Health System Planning: Assessing the relevance and accessibility of systematic reviews. First International Research Utilization Conference Toronto, Ontario April 24, 1998

May

Valaitis, R., Sinton, J., Sheenan, D., Passarelli, C., A Systematic Overview of the Relationship between Infant Feeding Caries and Breastfeeding. CAPHD/OAPHD Continuing Education Day, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto

Burden, T., Sheeshka, J., Lero, D.S., Hedley, M., Marsh, S., A Collaboration Between Public Health, A Child Caregiver Support Group, University Researchers and A Community Foundation. The Work/Family Balance Conference May 6, 1998, Toronto, Ontario

Ehrlich, A., Nelligan, P., First Place Primary Health Care Initiative. Trillium Primary Care Research Forum Conference, May 30, 1998, University of Western Ontario

June

Frosina, C., Can We Do It Better? Identifying and integrating Best Practices. CPHA Annual Conference June 7 – 10 1998, Montreal, PQ

Harkness, P., Underwood, J., Chan, D., Integrating Population Health with A Medical Practice 1998 CPHA Conference "Best Practices in Public Health" June 7 – 10 1998, Montreal P.Q.

Underwood, J., Brunton, G., Thomas, H., Spreading the Word About Public Health Research: The Public Health Effectiveness Project. CAN Conference, June 15, 1998 Ottawa, Ontario

Potter, B., Sheeshka, J., Valaitis, R., Do High-use Public Places Support, Protect, and Promote Breastfeeding? CPHA Annual Conference June 7 – 10, 1998, Montreal, PQ

Dolina, L., Hennessey, G., Hebert, A., How Older Adults and Children Review the Past and Look to the Future through Intergenerational Programs. 21st The Intergenerational Century, June 10, 11, 12 1998, McMaster University, Hamilton

September

Ehrlich, A., Nelligan, P., First Place Primary Health Care Initiative. Primary Care Council, September 15, 1998 Hamilton, Ontario

Thomas, H., Brunton, G., The Impact of Gender on Healthy Child/Youth Development: A systematic overview of literature reviews. McMaster Evidence Based Nursing Day, September 24, 1998, Hamilton Convention Centre

Thomas, H., Burcher, B., Ciliska, D., Wade, K., Feldman L., Brunton, G., Factors Influencing Child Development/Health That are Modifiable and Relevant to Public Health Nursing Practice: A systematic review of the literature. McMaster Evidence Based Nursing Day, September 24, 1998, Hamilton Convention Centre

October

Feightner, K., Wong, K., The Census of Canada: How to use Census data. Population Health N2Q02, October 6-7th 1998. School of Nursing, McMaster University, Hamilton Ontario

Sinton, J., Ontario Works Professional Workshops For Dental Professionals in the Hamilton-Wentworth Region, October 1998, Public Health Department, Hamilton Ontario

Sheeshka, J., Dawson, J., The Human Health Effects of Eating Great Lake Fish. Lake Erie Binational Public Forum, October 23, 1998, Buffalo, NY USA

Underwood, J., Goddard, P., Baumann, A., Restructuring and Reforming the Health Care System N4A02 – Trends and Issues School of Nursing, McMaster University, October 1, 1998



Voorberg, N., Rumble, J., Schofield, R., Ngenzebuhoro, F., Coalitions and Networks: Working together to Make a Difference. Vision 2020 Community Development Forum, October 16, 1998, Hamilton, Ontario

November

Brunton, G., Thomas, H., Ciliska, D., Hayward, S., Dobbins, M., Underwood, J., Spreading the Word about Public Health Research: The Public Health Effectiveness Project. Ontario Public Health Association, November 2-4, 1998, Barrie, Ontario

Frosina, C., Mathews, E., How is Your Water? Dental Unit Waterlines, and Biofilm Management. Ontario Public Health Association, November 2 - 4, 1998, Barrie, Ontario

Thomas, H., Sampling Issues with Qualitative Research APHEO Workshop 1998, November 26, 1998 Toronto, Ontario

Cowan, D., Black, M., Curran, J., Carpenter, D., Scott, D., Verbiskas, M., Nelligan, P., Vanderveken, A., Ehrlich, A., Creative Change: Moving to Neighbourhood Practice. Ontario Public Health Association, November 2-4, 1998, Barrie, Ontario

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

June

Jordison, D., Tuff, K., Voorberg, N., Woolner, K., Parent Link. Prevention Congress VIII of the Ontario Prevention Clearing House and the Canadian Pediatric Society, June 26, 1998, Hamilton, Ontario

October

Brunton, G., Thomas, H., Ciliska, D., Hayward, S., Dobbins, M., Underwood, J., Spreading the Word about Public Health Research: The Public Health Effectiveness Project. 6th International Cochrane Colloquium, October 22 - 26, 1998, Baltimore, MD USA

November

Thomas, H., Brunton, G., The Impact of Gender on Healthy Child/Youth Development: A systematic overview of Literature reviews. Ontario Public Health Association, November 2 - 4 1998, Barrie, Ontario

Thomas, H., Burcher, B., Ciliska, D., Wade, K., Feldman, L., Brunton, G., Factors influencing Child Development/Health That are Modifiable and Relevant to Public Health Nursing Practice: A systematic review of the literature. Ontario Public Health Association, November 2 - 4, 1998, Barrie, Ontario

Thesenvitz, J., Kids Need Breathing Space....Take Your Butt Outside! Ontario Public Health Association, November 2 - 4, 1998 Barrie, Ontario

Potter, B., Sheeshka, J., Valaitis, R., Women's experience Breastfeeding in restaurants. "Breastfeeding... Stepping into the Baby-Friendly Initiative" November 19 - 21, 1998, Vancouver, B.C.

PUBLICATIONS

Elliott-Moyer, P., Point of Purchase Program with the Barn Fruit Markets, Feasibility Survey, Final Report Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department, November 1998

Power, E.M., Sheeshka, J.D., Heron, A.L., Canadian Dietitians' Understanding of Food Security. 1998 Society for Nutrition Education

Dobbins, M., Ciliska, D., DiCenso, A., Dissemination and Use of Research Evidence for Policy and Practice: A Framework for Developing, Implementing and Evaluating Strategies. March 3, 1998

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

American Journal of Health Promotion
10th Annual Health Promotion Conference
March 1-6, 1999
Amelia Island, FL
Balancing High Tech with Human Touch in Health Promotion

The Evidence for Evidence
April 29 – 30, 1999
Shaw Conference Center, Edmonton, Alberta
Getting Value for Money in Economic Evaluations of Health and Health Care

Canadian Association for HIV Research
8th Annual Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research
May 1-4, 1999
Victoria, BC
The Shifting Epidemic : Research Directions for the New Millennium

Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis (CHEPA)
Annual Conference
May 19 – 21, 1999
Hamilton, ON
Treatment Decision-Making in the Clinical Encounter

Dalhousie School of Nursing conference
May 28, 1999
Halifax, NS
Meeting the Health Care Challenges in the Next Millennium: expanding roles of nurses

Canadian Public Health Association
90th Annual Conference
June 6-9, 1999
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Public Health in the New Millennium

3rd International Conference on the Scientific Basis of Health Services
October 1-3, 1999
Toronto, Ontario
Closing the Loop : evidence into health practice, organization and policy
www.paragon-conferences.on.ca/heal

American Public Health Association
127th Annual Meeting
Nov 7-11, 1999
Chicago, Ill.
Celebrating a Century of Progress in Public Health

Gerontological Society of America
52nd Annual Scientific Meeting
Nov 19-23, 1999
San Francisco
New Perspectives on Aging in the Post Genome Era

The Third Annual Community-Campus Partnerships for Health National Conference
March 27 – 20, 1999
Seattle, WA





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